

RECOVERY OF A LOST CHAPTER OF
METHODIST HISTORY IN GRAYS HARBOR
COUNTY, WASHINGTON

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“Lost” particulars of early Methodist history in southwest Washington State were discovered in mid-May 1980 by the Reverend Ray L. Whitlow, then pastor of the United Methodist Church at Montesano, when he remodeled a study in the church. Of the three bound volumes discovered, which contain the 1856-1910 records of the first Methodist Episcopal circuit, station and church in Grays Harbor County,¹ the most significant is the circuit book. In it are records of early Methodist classes, predecessors of six present-day churches and several discontinued charges in the Pacific Northwest Conference of The United Methodist Church.

Details pertinent to the Montesano church, abstracted from the records at the turn of the century, are preserved in three typescript histories prepared for local anniversary celebrations.² Copies of the histories were distributed only to those churches with ties to the earlier Methodist classes. Thus, the early history of a church such as the Hoquiam United Methodist Church was lost when pioneer members of the congregation died. Although an early and long out-of-print conference history mentions the town as a preaching place on an 1884 Aberdeen Circuit, a short sketch of the church in the 1966 conference

¹“Record of The Chehalis [Grays Harbor] Circuit, Oregon Conference, Methodist Episcopal Church,” 1856-1887, hereafter cited as Circuit Book. “Church Record of The Montesano Station, Methodist Episcopal Church,” 1887-1904, hereafter cited as Station Record. “Church Record of The First Methodist Episcopal Church, Montesano, Washington,” 1904-1910. Western Washington State was the Puget Sound District of the Oregon Conference before it became the Puget Sound Conference in 1884. Today it is a part of the Pacific Northwest Conference of The United Methodist Church.

²J. W. Miller, “Montesano — 40 Years,” 1900, 8pp. John M. Canse, “Montesano and Chehalis Circuit Methodism,” 1930, 7 pp. Jessie Lehmann, “A History of the Montesano Methodist Church,” 1960, 11 pp. Miller and Canse were Montesano pastors. Lehmann is a long-time member of that church. Copies of manuscript histories since prepared for PNW archives.

history begins, "First service in boom-town, Hoquiam, 1890."³ Members of that congregation were understandably elated to discover records of Methodist classes in Hoquiam in the mid-1870s in the circuit book.

To ensure preservation of the original records, the Administrative Board of the Montesano church transferred the three volumes found by the Reverend Whitlow to the Pacific Northwest Conference archives which are housed in the library of the University of Puget Sound at Tacoma, Washington.

To make the records more readily available to historians, the Conference Commission on Archives and History authorized the preparation of transcripts of the books, augmented by explanatory notes and indexes. That task is completed, and copies of the transcripts are located at the Montesano church, at the annual conference archives in Tacoma, and at the General Commission on Archives and History at Lake Junaluska, North Carolina. Local secular research librarians also expressed an interest in the old records, and there are copies of the transcripts at the public library in Aberdeen, Washington, which has the largest Grays Harbor history and genealogy collection in the county.

The Circuit Book

The circuit book, 14" x 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 1" in size, has a scuffed but sturdy black cover and sewn unnumbered pages of high quality paper. Most of the entries in it were made with permanent inks and are completely legible, although the marriage records for 1885-1887 are badly faded. While the book was printed in 1864, eight years after the first event recorded in it, internal evidence suggests that it was first used in 1872. Membership and baptismal records before that date are not in chronological order and the first segment of the book, a historical narrative, is the product of two distinctive hands: one for 1856-1872, the other for 1873-1880. Two written sources antedating the circuit book are cited in a 1930 history of the Montesano church: a "pocket text book" carried by the Reverend N. S. McAllister, one of three Methodist Episcopal clergymen who scouted the lower Chehalis River valley before the circuit was formed, and the "preserved papers" of a Montesano pioneer, C. N. Byles.⁴ It is possible that these sources, and the journals of other Methodists which are cited in early local secular histories, still exist. This writer has not been able to locate them.

³A. Atwood, *Glimpses in Pioneer Life on Puget Sound* (Seattle: Denny-Corvell Co., 1903), pp. 301-302. Erle Howell, *Methodism in the Northwest* (Nashville: The Parthenon Press, 1966) p. 145.

⁴Canse, pp. 2-3.

The terse but graphic historical narrative in the circuit book delineates the organization of the charge and its development through 1880. Church and class membership rosters, embellished with minutiae, and records of birth and baptism, marriage and death add dimension to a story of the planting of Methodism on a rugged, heavily forested frontier where settlers were few and far between, rivers served as the region's highways, and dugout shovel-nosed cedar canoes were the major transport for pioneers and itinerant Methodist clergymen as well as the indigenous American Indian tribes.⁵ Also in the circuit book are records of early class leaders, exhorters and local preachers whose names were not recorded in annual conference journals of the day.

The Chehalis (Grays Harbor) Circuit

"Chehalis Circuit, Oregon Conference, Methodist Episcopal Church" is the name which appears on the title page of the old record book. Organized during the conference year 1859-1860 as Gray's Harbor, the circuit was renamed Chehalis in 1867.⁶ (The reverse is true of the territorial county Chehalis which is now Grays Harbor County, without an apostrophe.) In this article, as in the transcript of the record book, the Methodist charge is identified as the "Chehalis (Grays Harbor) Circuit," a combination of the two names used at different times in conference journals. An unqualified designation of "Chehalis" might be confusing to present-day historians. "Chehalis" was also the name of a circuit with three preaching places in Lewis County, Washington before the turn of the century; of an Indian mission established in 1872; and of the present-day United Methodist Church organized in 1884 in the city of Chehalis.⁷

In 1856 when she and her husband William settled on Wynooche Prairie (now Montesano), Martha Medcalf was the first Methodist to reside in the county. Three years later, the second was Lorinda Scammon who journeyed from Maine with three children to join their husband and father. Isaiah Scammon, in 1852, was Montesano's first

⁵For a description of Grays Harbor County in the latter half of the nineteenth century see Flora E. Wartman-Arland, "The Story of Montesano," Golden Anniversary Edition, *Montesano* (Washington) *Vidette*, 12 October 1933; facsimile reproduction (Seattle: Shorey book Store, 1968), 32 pp. The Circuit Book and journals of a Methodist pioneer layman, Patterson Luark, are among the sources used for this town history which recounts incidents in the development of the Montesano church not found in other published sources or in the Circuit Book.

⁶Atwood, p. 189.

⁷Atwood, pp. 330, 343-344; Thomas D. Yarnes, *A History of Oregon Methodism*, ed. Harvey E. Tobie (Nashville: The Parthenon Press, n.d. [published after Dr. Yarnes' 1957 death]), pp. 304-305; Howell, pp. 99, 438.

settler. His wife, an enterprising woman with an ecumenical bent, began to make arrangements for preaching services before she reached her new home.⁸

On her voyage to Puget Sound Sister Scammon became acquainted with Bro. Lippincott and informed him that she was a member of the Methodist Church and going to make her home where she would be deprived of the public means of grace.

Brother Lippincott as a true Methodist preacher sympathised with her and promised as soon as practicable to visit the few Settlers on [the] Chehalis River

....

On Mount Prairie she met with Father Goodell a Presbyterian minister who promised her to visit the new Settlement and preach.⁹

True to their words, both clergymen visited the settlers in the summer of 1859 — first the Presbyterian, then the Methodist. The Reverend B. C. Lippincott, accompanied by the Reverend N. S. McAllister, reported to Presiding Elder Nehemiah Doane that in the lower Chehalis River valley there was an “open door for the gospel.” A few weeks later he too visited the region and secured the ground for the Methodists by organizing a class with two members, Martha Medcalf and Lorinda Scammon. (It would be another decade before their husbands joined the church.) The women “earnestly desired the Elder to secure them a preacher” and the Reverend J. S. Douglas was appointed to the new circuit. A young man and inexperienced, he

met the circumstances in the true Spirit [and] traveled up and down the river visiting from house to house and preaching to the people. He also visited the Settlers around Grays Harbor traveling in a Small open boat occasionally crossing the Bay to Chehalis Point [now Westport] and the Ocean Beach.¹⁰

Douglas, appointed in the spring of 1860, traveled a circuit huge for the day which extended from Oakville to the mouth of the Chehalis River and down the coast to Oysterville in Pacific County. Once a month, and sometimes every other month, he conducted worship services on Wynooche Prairie. Given the hazardous travel conditions of the time and place, the clergyman could have preached at other points on the circuit no more often.¹¹

In 1860 and 1861 the Reverend W. J. Franklin was appointed to the circuit. A single man, “he spent the most of his time with the families, praying, singing and preaching as opportunity served.” This clergyman also provided a less exalted but much needed service by filling teeth and

⁸Circuit Book, Historical Record. In this article quotations from this source retain the spelling, punctuation or lack thereof, and other literary forms of the original. Isaiah Scammon joined the church in 1868 or 1869; William Medcalf in 1873. Maine is given as Scammon’s prior residence in Wartman-Arland, p. 4.

⁹Circuit Book, Historical Record.

¹⁰*Ibid.*

¹¹Miller, pp. 1-2.

extracting the aching molars of pioneers.¹²

The circuit had no pastor in 1862 and the Reverend H. C. Rhoades, appointed in August 1863, located at the end of the conference year to become the district school master and Montesano's first teacher. On occasion he still preached in the town but for the succeeding four years the circuit again had no appointed pastor. Presiding Elder Harvey K. Hines, commissioned by the annual conference in 1868 to learn "the condition of the work," found that "during the long interval that the circuit had been left out Methodism instead of becoming obsolete had grown." Later in the year the Reverend H. C. Lane was appointed. During the second year of his pastorate he proposed that a church be built at Montesano, but he was unable to secure funds sufficient for the undertaking. In 1870, when walking and rowing were still the only means of getting from one place to another, the Reverend C. H. Hoxie "extended the circuit already too large for one man to travel" and organized a class at the Quinaielt (now Quinault) Indian Reservation 55 miles north of Oysterville, the southernmost preaching place on the circuit.¹³

In 1871 the Oysterville class in Pacific County became part of another charge, and the Reverend W. T. Chapman, a "young man of deep piety . . . a fair preacher," was appointed to the Chehalis (Grays Harbor) Circuit. During his pastorate a church at Montesano was built and painted, but the interior was not finished. In 1872 the Reverend Ira F. Ward was the first clergyman with a family to be appointed to the circuit. His successor, the Reverend T. M. Reese, "did very acceptably for one year."¹⁴

During the three-year pastorate (1874-76) of the Reverend W. I. Cospers, the church begun by Chapman was completed "inside and out Ceiled Seated Painted and made quite comfortable — The people and Pastor deserve great praise for constructing and finishing the Church edifice the first building in the Chehalis Valley dedicated to the worship of Almighty God, reminding all who behold it that we are living in a Christian community."¹⁵

The concluding paragraphs of the historical narrative in the circuit book are little more than a listing of one-year pastorates for 1877-80. The Reverend J. H. Allyn who "labored faithfully" was succeeded by the Reverend Thomas Magill. The Reverend M. Whitmore, "a minister of age & experience" returned to Iowa before the close of the conference year because of his wife's ill health, and Magill returned from Oregon for a

¹²Circuit Book, Historical Record. For pastor as dentist see Wartman-Arland, p. 17; Lehmann, p. 3.

¹³Circuit Book, Historical Record.

¹⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁵*Ibid.*

second Montesano pastorate. "During his absence he lost by death his little boy, Henry. . . ."

Women of the Circuit

Although Martha Medcalf was the first Methodist to reside in Grays Harbor County, and Lorinda Scammon was the first person to actively recruit clergymen for the region, women have no other claims to fame in the circuit book. Only men are named in the record of official members. Addressing his Montesano congregation in 1930, John M. Canse said, "[an] omission startles us, in the light of more recent church activities — there was no report of any Ladies Aid Society in the records down to the time this building was begun." The church to which he referred, remodelled and still in use today, was erected in 1891.¹⁶

There are, however, sources other than circuit records which recount the activities of Methodist women in Grays Harbor County in pioneer days, when pious women in prairie pants and sunbonnets "ruled the dooryard with Bible, frying pan, hoe and rifle."¹⁷ Presiding Elder A. Atwood, traveling in the county from 1879 to 1883, learned that Lorinda Scammon — she who invited Methodist and Presbyterian alike to preach at her new home — was no shrinking violet.

Mrs. Isaiah Scammons [sic] was a devoted Christian and was highly esteemed for the sweetness of her spirit and her many excellencies of character. On one occasion a party of travelers were stopping at her home. They were about to engage in a game of cards, and had removed the Bible from its place on the stand in order that they might have room to manipulate the cards. Just at that moment Sister S. appeared upon the scene. She very kindly objected to the whole proceeding, especially to the use of the stand for so sacrilegious a purpose. The game was indefinitely postponed with expressions of regret.¹⁸

Each summer in the late 1860s and through the 1870s protracted revival meetings drew large crowds from all over the county to a campground just east of Montesano in a "primeval forest where God was worshipped in spirit and in truth." Here the Methodists constructed an open auditorium complete with pulpit and many small cabins, each with sitting room, two bedrooms, and kitchen. Families who provided their own furniture remained at the camp meetings for weeks on end. Women prepared food ahead of time so that they might attend daily worship services morning, afternoon and evening. One of the persons who led the singing at the meetings was a woman, Eliza Medcalf, later Mrs. C. N.

¹⁶Canse, pp. 6-7; Howell, p. 32.

¹⁷Edwin Van Syckle, *They Tried to Cut it All: Grays Harbor — Turbulent Years of Greed and Greatness* (Seattle: Friends of the Aberdeen Public Library, 1980), pp. 1-2. The names of many persons featured in this history of the county's logging industry are found in the Circuit Book.

¹⁸Atwood, p. 191.

Byles. (She was also Montesano's first woman school teacher and in 1884, without her knowledge or consent, a write-in candidate who garnered several votes for the office of city treasurer — the first woman in the county to be nominated for public office.) In the late 1870s Methodist women sponsored necktie socials, oyster suppers and other events at the church, providing entertainment by giving readings, playing musical instruments and singing. In Montesano — which had no saloons as late as 1883, thirty-one years after the first settler arrived — the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, with many Methodist members, concentrated on civic betterment projects. Among other things, they operated a reading room for the general public long before a public library was established.¹⁹

Ongoing research may yet reveal when the first Ladies Aid in Grays Harbor County was organized. It was at least as early as 1883 when a pastor's wife, Mrs. Samuel D. Lougheed, became president of the Montesano Aid. The goal of the organization was two-fold: to provide social entertainment for Methodists and their friends and to refurbish the interior of the church.²⁰ In spite of demonstrated capability, however, it would be another ten years before a woman was elected a steward of the church; fifteen years before a woman served as class leader.²¹

Methodist Classes and Lay Leaders

In the circuit book there are membership rosters for classes organized before 1872 at Wynooche (Lower Montesano), Greenwood, Satsop and the Quinault Indian Reservation, and for classes organized through 1885 at Oak Grove (now Oakville), Grays Harbor (with the meeting place in the region abutting the harbor not given), Hoquiam, Kamilche in Mason County, Elma, Ford Prairie, Montesano and Cosmopolis. Each new pastor revised the rosters but those before 1874 are not dated. Because 1872 is the first year in which a class met at Greenwood,²² and because two sets of undated rosters precede those for 1874, it seems probable that the first class membership records for Wynooche, Greenwood, Satsop and Quinault are for the year 1872.

An Oysterville class is mentioned only once in the circuit book, as a charge assigned to another pastor following an 1871 division of the Chehalis (Grays Harbor) Circuit. Conference histories mention that a class was established at this preaching place around 1854, that it was supplied by Montesano-based pastors during 1859-1862 and 1868-1870,

¹⁹Wartman-Arland, pp. 16-19, 26-28.

²⁰*Chehalis Valley Vidette* (now *Montesano [Washington] Vidette*), 29 March 1883. This was the second month in which this first newspaper in Grays Harbor County was published.

²¹Station Record, pp. 2-4.

²²Atwood, p. 215.

and that a church was built in the town in 1873. The charge was discontinued about thirty years ago. Today the nearest United Methodist charge is Ocean Park about three miles south of Oysterville.²³

Wynooche Class No. 1 — the two-member class organized before a pastor was appointed to the circuit — had twenty members in 1872. Ten years later it had more than a hundred members and the name was changed to Montesano. In the mid-1880s, when the Chehalis River was bridged at Montesano and some of the members no longer had to boat across the river in fair weather and foul, the class was divided. For some years there were stationed pastors at Montesano and also at Wynooche, which has not been a conference charge since 1889. The oldest church of any denomination in Grays Harbor County is the United Methodist Church at Montesano where the circuit records were re-discovered.²⁴

Greenwood Class No. 2, with 25 members in 1872, was the largest class on the circuit, a lead over the Wynooche class which it held for only one year. Sometime between 1874 and 1877, when the next class record was entered in the circuit book, Class No. 2 split. Some of the members continued to meet at Greenwood, but more than half of them met at Elma, two miles away. No explanation is given for the division, but at the bottom of the only record of an Elma class in the circuit book a notation reads, "Revised, and consolidated with Greenwood Class Aug. 20th, 1878 by J. H. Allyn, pastor." According to an early conference history, the class was first organized at Elma in 1868 by the Reverend H. B. Lane, then pastor of the Chehalis (Grays Harbor) Circuit, and the appointment was moved to Greenwood in 1872 and back to Elma in 1883. Between 1879 and 1883 Presiding Elder A. Atwood preached in Elma every three months, although the regular preaching place during this period was at Greenwood. Elma, which is a United Methodist charge today, became the head of a small circuit in 1884.²⁵

Satsop Class No. 3 was probably organized in 1868, for several of the members of the class became members in full connection that year. There are records for this class in the circuit book for the years 1872-1883. An early conference history mentions Satsop only as a preaching place that was part of the new Elma charge in 1884. A sketch of the Satsop church prepared for a 1966 conference history begins with the organization in 1891 of a Sunday school, with no reference to the earlier Methodist class in the town. Today the United Methodist Church at Satsop is supplied by

²³Circuit Book, Historical Record; Atwood, pp. 183-186; Howell, pp. 39 (with South Bend), 97 (with Bay Center), 460.

²⁴Circuit Book, Historical Record and Class Records; Atwood, pp. 188-192; Howell, pp. 32, 440, 466. For bridging of Chehalis see Wartman-Arland, pp. 28-29. For the most recent appointments to Montesano and other present-day charges see PNW *Journal UMC*, 1981.

²⁵Circuit Book, Class Records; Atwood, pp. 215-216; Howell, pp. 101, 439.

the McCleary pastor.²⁶

Quinault Class No. 4, organized in 1871 by the Reverend C. H. Hoxie, was always small, having only nine members at its heyday in 1873. By 1880 only two members remained and a notation in the last (undated) record of the class indicates that these people moved away. There is nothing in the circuit book to indicate that the members of the Quinault Indian Tribe were ever a part of this class of white men employed at the reservation and their wives. In 1896 Quinault was listed as a charge to be supplied in the conference journal, but the attempt to establish a church at the reservation was not successful.²⁷

Oak Grove (now Oakville) Class No. 5 appears in the circuit book only once in an 1873 class record which gives the name of the leader, James Harris, but not the names of members. According to conference histories, regular prayer meetings were established at Oakville in 1872 and the class was organized during the conference year 1873-1874 by the Reverend T. M. Reese, then pastor of the Chehalis (Grays Harbor) Circuit. The class was a part of several different charges until 1889, when it became a preaching place on the Elma circuit. A year later a church was erected at Oakville which is a United Methodist charge today.²⁸

Hoquiam Class No. 6, originally known as Grays Harbor, was probably organized in 1874 since more than half of its first members are found in Wynooche class records for 1872 and 1873. One of them became a member in full connection in 1869, another in 1870. The Grays Harbor class was renamed "Hokium" in 1877 and this phonetic spelling of "Hoquiam" was rectified in succeeding class records. The leader of the class, Nathan Voorhies, and his wife became members of a new Harboro Circuit in 1883 when the Chehalis (Grays Harbor) Circuit was partitioned.²⁹

The new circuit embraced a huge area extending from Grays Harbor north to the Strait of Juan de Fuca, described by a conference historian as "a territory larger than that of Connecticut and Rhode Island combined." Cape Flattery, the most northern point, was 150 miles from the head of the circuit. The pastor traversed the distance on foot, hiking for more than 75 miles along the shore of the Pacific Ocean and crossing seven major rivers en route. There were few trails then and it would be a quarter of a century before even the most primitive roadways were hacked out in the region's towering forests.³⁰

²⁶Circuit Book, Class Records and Record of Members in Full Connection; Atwood, p. 216; Howell, pp. 162, 439.

²⁷Circuit Book, Class Records; Howell, p. 460.

²⁸Circuit Book, Class Records; Atwood, pp. 272-273; Howell, pp. 150, 442.

²⁹Circuit Book, Class Records and Record of Members in Full Connection.

³⁰Howell, pp. 162, 164.

The Reverend Samuel D. Lougheed, who supplied the Harboro Circuit, described his travels in two letters addressed to his daughter Josephine (Mrs. W. A. Kearns). The first letter, dated April 8, 1884, speaks of a contemplated trip:

I want to get off on my coast trip soon as I can. I wrote about my receiving the appointment to Andrew [a son] & wish he was able to go with me. O what sights!! And a country as yet unsurveyed from which to select land. All the country *North of Grays Harbor to Neah Bay & the Straits of Fuca* along the coast is to be examined and my report will be published. I would wait for any of the family for a month or six weeks, that might desire to go.³¹

A September 18, 1884 letter describes Lougheed's journey to his new appointment at Dungeness, Washington Territory:

Well my terrible task is recited. I have rounded Cape Flattery and Neah Bay and the Straits [Strait] of Fuca and have gone up the Psyche River and to every settler on its banks; also, on the Quileute River, from its mouth to the farthest settler on its banks and organized one church or class and am the first minister that has ever been in, or preached in the Quileute Valley. Also on the Quinault River 4-5 miles from its mouth where I was before Conference . . . All this in the interests of the M. E. Church. The Quileute Valley will be a new charge another year. Your old father organized it this visit there. I made a preemption for our church. I travelled 50 miles by a rough mountain trail in two days, and preached 3 times, reaching the Steamer in good season, on the mouth of the Pysche River, on the Sound waters, and after an all night steaming on these waters, reached Dungeness for breakfast. Everyone was surprised to see me nibble (sic) as a kitten while one young man "tetered out" and we left him at the mouth of the Quileute to rest. Well I am here in my new field of labor doing all I can for the Lord. Eternity seems close at hand, and heaven very near. "What hast thou *done* for me" comes ringing from the cross every day; and by and by will ring out from the judgment. I desire to be ready to answer that I have *done something* and *done all* I could. Then to hear from the Saviour "*well done*" will make my eternity blissful.³²

When he made the trip to Dungeness, Lougheed was sixty years old. The report which he expected to see published was condensed by his Presiding Elder to a short sentence or two. The Quileute (Quillayute) class was abandoned after only a few years. Conference histories make no mention of the Reverend Lougheed's role in the organization of that class.³³

The Harboro Circuit became the Aberdeen Circuit, with Hoquiam as one of its preaching places, in 1884. At the time the sister cities were separated by treacherous mud flats and a heavy forest. Today only a

³¹Copy of letter furnished writer by Leonard Lougheed (now deceased) of Montesano, Washington, a grandson of the Reverend Samuel D. Lougheed.

³²*Ibid.*

³³Samuel D. Lougheed's birthdate is given on an 1834 embroidered birth record in the possession of Lougheed descendants. For Presiding Elder's comments in re Lougheed report and for Quileute (Quillayute) Mission see Howell, pp. 162, 164, 460. See also Atwood, pp. 361-364.

small sign marks the dividing point and there is a United Methodist Church in each city. The Aberdeen congregation meets in the second church built since the original building dedicated in 1887 was abandoned; the Hoquiam congregation meets in a several times remodelled church dedicated in 1891.³⁴

Kamilche Class No. 7 met at Little Skookum and at the Kamilche school house. Membership dwindled from seven persons when the class was organized in 1876 to two when it was discontinued in 1883. Making no reference to this class served by Chehalis (Grays Harbor) Circuit pastors, an early conference historian reported that the portion of Mason County embracing Kamilche and Shelton was first included in conference appointments in 1885. A church at Shelton, organized in the late 1880s, is a United Methodist charge today.³⁵

A Ford Prairie Class was organized in 1879, and in the circuit book there are records for that class through 1883. Since it lies between Elma and Oakvillé, Ford Prairie probably became part of a new Elma circuit (which included Oakville as a preaching place) carved from the Chehalis (Grays Harbor) Circuit in 1884.³⁶

A class at Cosmopolis, organized by Montesano pastor W. I. Cospers in January 1885, became part of the Aberdeen charge later that year. It is the last class for which there is a membership record in the circuit book. A church organized at Cosmopolis in 1886 was merged with the First United Methodist Church at Aberdeen in 1968.³⁷

For a ten-year period beginning in 1872 twenty men were elected local preachers, exhorters and class leaders for the Chehalis (Grays Harbor) Circuit. Some of them served in more than one capacity and a number of them moved from one locale to another, serving at more than one place. *Local Preachers* were W. H. Amidon, Wynooche; Silas W. Dickerson and Gordon A. Henry, Quinault; Simon S. Markham, a resident of Johns River and a member of the Hoquiam class; and Ed Callow, Sr., Kamilche. *The exhorters* were W. T. Glenn, Satsop; Gordon A. Henry and J. R. Johnson, Quinault; M. J. Luark, Montesano; and John C. Glenn, Wynooche. *Class Leaders* were Joseph Mace, C. N. Byles, and Squire Zenor, Wynooche; David F.

³⁴Atwood, pp. 301-302, 366-369; Howell, pp. 95, 145; *Hoquiam* (Washington) *Washingtonian* (later *Grays Harbor Washingtonian*), 7 May 1891, 13 August 1891; Rosa Peffly Motes: *History of the United Methodist Church, Hoquiam, Washington* (Hoquiam: UMC, 1975), 37 pp.; *A History of the First United Methodist Church of Aberdeen, Washington* (Aberdeen: UMC, 1976), 73 pp.; *United Methodist Pastors of Hoquiam, Washington* (Hoquiam: UMC, 1980), 58 pp.

³⁵Circuit Book, Class Records; Atwood, pp. 334-336; Howell, pp. 128, 435.

³⁶Circuit Book, Class Records; Atwood, pp. 215-216.

³⁷Circuit Book, Class Records; Atwood, p. 343; Howell, pp. 83, 439; *PNW Journal UMC*, 1968, p. 99.

Byles, Greenwood; Frank Talbot and W. T. Glenn, Satsop; Gordon A. Henry, S. W. Dickerson and J. H. Brewer, Quinault; James Harris, Oakville; Franklin Kennedy and John Campbell, Kamilche; Nathan Voorhies, Hoquiam; Squire Zenor, Elma; Thomas Stevens, Ford Prairie; C. N. Byles and Squire Zenor, Montesano. The name of the leader of the Cosmopolis class was not recorded.

Birth, Death and Marriage

The Chehalis (Grays Harbor) Circuit records of birth, baptism, marriage and death — the bedrocks of genealogy and local history — are more than a simple listing of people and events. In the records are allusions to customs and activities of the region's pioneers and their attitudes toward life and death.

The baptismal record mentions only the modes of sprinkling and pouring, although in later years at some places in the county the immersion of groups of Methodists in the region's icy rivers was not uncommon.³⁸ Twenty adults, one child, four youths and thirty-six "infants" (some of them six years old) were baptized by circuit pastors between 1870 and 1889. Parentage and date of birth are given for sixteen infants and one adult, with date of baptism providing "no later than" birth dates for other infants and children. A sign of the times is found in printed instructions in the circuit book which emphasize the fact that for many persons the church baptismal record was the only written proof of birth which existed.

Between 1878 and 1887 circuit pastors united 28 couples in holy matrimony. In addition to names and places of residence of brides and grooms, and names of officiating clergymen, the record gives the occupations of the grooms. (The names of witnesses were not required during this period.) Many of the grooms were farmers, but among them were also two loggers, two blacksmiths, and one (of each) barber, captain (seaman? military officer?), civil engineer, contractor, merchant, painter, physician, sawyer, tanner and tinner. Occupations of four of the men were not recorded.

Obituaries for three pioneers appear in the appendix of the circuit book. Sarah A. Arland "departed this life April 29, 1879. Her death was a happy & triumphant one . . . She was taken away in life's morning to spend a long and blissful immortality with her blessed redeemer." Grays Harbor County's first Methodist, Martha Ann Medcalf,

³⁸"Record Book, First United Methodist Episcopal Church, Aberdeen, Washington, 1885-1907;" baptismal records for Aberdeen and Cosmopolis. Record Book at Aberdeen UMC. "Record Book No. 1, Methodist Episcopal Church, Hoquiam, Washington, 1890-1910;" baptismal records. Record Book at Hoquiam United Methodist Church.

departed this life [in] 1880 after a long and painful illness. Sometime previous to her death her soul was greatly cheered and blessed by her Savior's presence causing to her poor heart joy unspeakable. Previous to her death disease cast a shadow over her mind which was chased away when her freed and happy spirit passed death's shadowy portals to be forever with the Lord. Death to her was a sweet relief.

"Father" Edward Callow of Kamilche, a native of the Isle of Mann and a local preacher for many years, "passed to his reward November 1881 after a lingering illness . . . He died as the righteous dieth." In records of church membership the deaths of other persons are noted, most of them by a simple "died" with no other information given, although it is recorded that Ettie Medcalf "died in peace" in 1875. I. M. Spencer "died in the Lord" (date not given). Jerusha Wood Hall "died near Claquato in 1875." Elizabeth A. Shasbey "died in Triumph" in 1891.

A Continuing Quest

Today there are United Methodist churches with direct ties to the old Chehalis (Grays Harbor) Circuit at Elma, Montesano, Aberdeen, Hoquiam, Oakville and Satsop. For all of these churches there are fragments of history in the circuit book which are not found in other sources. The Reverend Paul Kuhn, pastor of the United Methodist Church at Hoquiam, refers to this information as the "pre-history of our church."

Convinced that other circuit books may hold the earliest history of many churches unbeknownst to their members, the Commission on Archives and History of the Pacific Northwest Conference of the United Methodist Church is encouraging local churches to add such records to the conference archives at Tacoma, where they will be available to all church historians.